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Leadership and gender: a dangerous liaison?

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to review the extant literature on the ways women lead in organizations with a focus on the fields of business and education. A secondary purpose is to identify implications of the literature for leadership and gender issues in the worlds of business and education.

Design/methodology/approach – A review of the extant literature was conducted to collect data through professional and academic journals of business and education, pertinent web sites, and textbooks. Once these data were collected, they were placed in categories according to common themes and patterns that emerged from the literature on the leadership styles of women in business and education.

Findings – Research findings show that women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles in the corporate world and in education. Transformational leadership is the preferred leadership style used by women. The characteristics of transformational leadership relate to female values developed through socialization processes that include building relationships, communication, consensus building, power as influence, and working together for a common purpose.

Originality/value – This paper provides a theoretical perspective on women's leadership behaviours as an approach to equity in organizations by capitalizing on female contributions to organizations and the importance of those contributions in an increasingly diverse workforce world-wide. Women leadership styles are presented as alternatives to traditional leadership models.

Keywords North America, Leadership, Education, Gender, Culture (sociology)
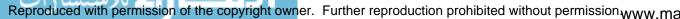
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The growing presence of women in the international workforce continues to motivate research on the leadership styles of women, particularly to determine if women have their own ways of leading. The real issue in leadership differences lies in the equity in selecting the right person with the appropriate skills and qualities to ensure the effectiveness and success of the organization (Barker, 2000; Bass and Avolio, 1994). The integration of women in leadership roles is not a matter of "fitting in" the traditional models, but "giving in" the opportunities for them to practice their own leadership styles. Since organizations have been mostly occupied by men, some women have chosen successful male leaders and their styles as their role models (Appelbaum and Shapiro, 1993). Some others dare break the mold and start with leadership styles that openly reveal feminine traits and behaviors as "silent cries" for social justice and a place of their own in organizations. The strategic value of these styles for organizations lies in the merging of both innate feminine characteristics and professional skills developed in the workplace that contribute to the attainability of organizational goals.

The differences in men's and women's leadership styles are important considering the trends towards flatter organizations, team-based management, and globalization

(Evans, 2001; Helgesen, 1990; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994; Rosener, 1990). As trends change, so should leadership styles that reconcile with the newly designed organizations and with the demands originated within. Flattered organizations with authority dispersed throughout levels require different types of leadership that are not particular of women but seen as having feminine characteristics (Bass and Avolio, 1994; Freeman and Varey, 1997; Stanford et al., 1995; Van der Boon, 2003). The integration of these characteristics into leadership models will create unlimited opportunities for women to play a definite role in leading the transformational change organizations require.

The presence of feminine or masculine characteristics in leadership styles is related to the construct of gender (Larson and Freeman, 1997). Gender, race, class, and other elements of social difference are acknowledged to play an important role in the development of leadership styles. However, the best-known work of scholars and current popular texts about leadership (Bennis and Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Hersey and Blanchard, 1988; Northouse, 2004; Preedy et al., 2003) do not remark these elements. For purposes of this article women leaders will be operationalized as a homogeneous group. The intent is not to contribute to women's invisibility in leadership by ignoring their differences in terms of race or class. On the contrary, while acknowledging these differences, the construct of women will be used considering women as one visible voice. Likewise, the intent of the review is not to compare the leadership styles of men and women but to posit a different interpretation of women's leadership behaviors. Recognizing women's styles of leadership represents an important approach to equity as long as they are not stereotyped as "the" ways women lead but as "other" ways of leading.

The feminine leadership styles are not better or worse than the traditional male-oriented ones, they are just different. According to Shakeshaft (1993, p. 105), "The point of examining these differences is not to say one approach is right and one is wrong, but rather to help us understand that males and females may be coming from very different perspectives, and that unless we understand these differences, we are not likely to work well together".

The purpose of this paper is to review the extant literature on the ways women lead in educational organizations where they have shown an increasing involvement and have developed as leaders. While the a focus is women and educational leadership in a North American context, the literature has a broader trans-national focus, exploring themes and issues that span national boundaries and cultures. As indicated by Preedy et al. (2003, p. 1) "It is important for educational leaders to transcend sectoral boundaries in their thinking" for much remains to be learned "from reflecting on one's own professional context in the light of insights drawn from other sectors and cultures". Some business leadership literature is presented due to similarities to educational leadership. First, a general review of the relationship between leadership and gender is presented. This is followed by an account of the factors that mostly affect the development of female leadership styles. Common trends that influence women in education are then presented, followed by descriptions of the barriers faced by women in their path to leadership and their leadership styles in educational institutions (i.e. public school systems) are discussed. Finally, the authors offer conclusions and implications for further research.

Leadership and gender relationship
Literature on leadership and gender often focus on the influence of the latter to emphasize certain dimensions of leadership over others (Pounder and Coleman, 2002). Feminine leadership styles are described in general terms as interpersonal-oriented, charismatic and democratic (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Freeman and Varey, 1997) and related to gender because of stereotypes of women as being sensitive, warm, tactful and expressive (Olsson and Walker, 2003; Van Engen *et al.*, 2001).

Leadership and leadership style in simple terms
Leadership is subjectively constructed. A comprehensive definition of leadership is that of a process in which an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2004). The definition of leadership looks simple, but the concept itself involves much more. According to Gardner (1995, p. 292), "The greatest challenge the leaders face is to bring about significant and lasting changes in a large and heterogeneous group". Leadership style is by definition leadership behavior with two clearly independent dimensions: the task dimension that includes goal setting, organization, direction, and control; and the relationship dimension involving support, communication, interaction, and active listening (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988). A precise definition of the perfect or ideal leadership style would be useless considering the numerous factors that might shape such a style.

Gender and gender role defined
Gender refers to the distinctive culturally created qualities of men and women apart from their biological differences (Brandser, 1996). The construct of gender implies the way meaning associates with sex in members of a culture in terms of expected learned behaviors, traits, and attitudes (DeMatteo, 1994; Northouse, 2004). The concept of gender role is situationally constructed in organizations, and based on: masculinity involving aggression, independence, objectivity, logic, analysis, and decision, and; femininity involving emotions, sensitivity, expressiveness, and intuition (Fernandes and Cabral-Cardoso, 2003).

Relationship between leadership and gender
The relationship between gender role and leadership style is the association of masculinity with task-oriented leadership styles and femininity with relationship-oriented ones (Oshagbemi and Gill, 2003; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). This relationship is not so clear-cut for women. Two opposite currents are constantly encountering women swimming in the middle when they have to decide what leadership styles need to be adopted in the workplace. Jamieson (1995) developed the concept of the femininity/competency bind where behaving feminine is associated with incompetence and behaving masculine is associated with competency. If the masculine model represents the universal and dominant model of leadership (Fernandes and Cabral-Cardoso, 2003), women understand that in order to escalate the ranks they have to conform to it (Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). In other words, the same few influence strategies that proved to be successful for men are repeatedly used by women (Rizzo and Mendez, 1988).

What should women do in order to keep afloat between these two currents related to gender and leadership styles? The strategy is to develop behaviors feminine enough

not to deviate from the gender role expectation, but masculine enough to gain credibility as professionals; in simple terms, women have to create their own leadership styles. As Gardner (1995, p. 88) reiterates "Leadership is never guaranteed; it must always be renewed".

Women's leadership styles: the "whys" behind

If sexes are perceived so differently in organizations, it would seem likely that leadership styles are also different. The common belief is that women need to be trained up to the level of men, arguing equal opportunities training, rather than value what they bring to organizations (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Fortunately, the "baggage" women leaders bring is gaining more visibility and attracting more attention as the female presence in leadership positions increases. The baggage is the result of three basic influential factors that shape behaviors of women and men throughout their personal and professional lives:

(1) socialization;

(2) culture of origin; and

(3) organizational culture.

Socialization

A major component of any leadership development process involves socialization whereby attention is drawn to the leader and the context simultaneously. The term "socialization" refers to the processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively (Merton, 1963). Brim (as cited in Feldman, 1989, p. 3), defines socialization as "the manner in which an individual learns that behaviour appropriate to his position in a group through interaction with others who hold normative beliefs about what his role should be and who reward or punish him for correct or incorrect actions". Bennis and Nanus (1985) assert that socialization involves a complex set of human relationships interacting in many ways. They state that within an organization, the socialization includes all the people in it and their relationships to each other and to the outside world. Hence, the behaviour of one member can have an impact, either directly or indirectly, on the behaviour of others. Van Gennep's three-stage model of socialization may explain how individuals progress from being defined by others to being self-defined. according to van gennep (1960), at the separation stage people are concerned with comparing themselves with others and how others judge their adequacy. at the transition stage people compare themselves against the standards imposed by the functions of the job and task performance. At the incorporation stage individuals make comparisons between their former and present self.

Because of the socialization process, women have developed values and beliefs that translate into specific behaviors arising in their leadership styles. Certain expected behaviors in organizations are explained as the result of the socialization process that occurs outside the organization's borders (Brandser, 1996). For example, women are socialized to show their emotions, feelings, compassion, patience, and intuition; to help and care for others (Bass and Avolio, 1994; DeMatteo, 1994; Pounder and Coleman, 2002); to be listeners (Brunner, 1998); to judge outcomes based on their impact on relationships (Oakley, 2000); and to lead complex settings in continuous change

(Caprioli and Boyer, 2001). The list of values and skills might sound ideal but they become high barriers difficult to overcome for women aspiring to leadership positions. The main disadvantage is that the nurturing and caring image of women takes them to occupy supportive roles whereas men occupy the leading ones (Pounder and Coleman, 2002). The responsibility of women for complying with the social norms, values, and roles is burdensome when it comes to the world of organizations.

Culture of origin
Culture is defined as a pattern of ways of thinking, feeling, and reacting acquired and transmitted through symbols; the essence of culture consists of traditional ideas and their attached values (Kluckhohn, 1951). Among the many patterns of thinking and reacting lies leadership and the corresponding values linked to it. Leadership is expected to be alike in countries with similar value-orientation, and different in countries with divergent ones (Gibson, 1995). In other words, countries with similar values will develop a leadership style of their own.

Hofstede (1980) argued that the leaders who develop the management practices determine the degree of masculine or feminine values in those practices according to the predominant ones in a particular country. Women in leading positions will only stress the feminine values up to the level of natural acceptance in a country's culture, but hardly any further. According to Scott (cited in Brandser, 1996, p. 14), "Man is the hidden reference in language and culture; women can only aspire to be as good as a man; there is no point trying to be as good as a woman". Merton (1963) suggests that culture is learned through socialization. Van Gennep (1960) and Van Maanen (1976) assert that culture provides values, norms and roles that are enforced by positive and negative sanctions. The learning of these values, norms and roles is supported by the agents of socialization (family, peers, organizational mass media and early life experiences). Sub-cultural influences can complement or counteract the cultural values and norms and would apply to all leaders' ethical behaviour, as their behaviour occurs within the context of both the overall culture they are part of and any subculture they may belong to (Begley and Cambell-Evans, 1992).

Organizational culture
Organizational culture refers to the set of assumptions, beliefs, values, and norms that are shared by members of an organization and is influenced by its past, environment, and industry (Rutherford, 2001; Stoll, 1999). Organizational culture also applies to communication, codes of behavior, processes, and policies (Still, 1994). Schein (1992) and Normore (2004c) offer compelling arguments that each new leader needs to understand and analyze the particular organizational culture into which she or he is placed, emphasizing that leadership is intertwined with each particular organizational culture.

Someone appointed from inside the organization brings past experience and knowledge to this process, as opposed to someone who is brought in from the outside. Research (e.g. Gibson, 1995; Normore, 2004a, b; Rutherford, 2001; Schein, 1992) indicate that there are mediating influences on leaders' socialization such as work setting, culture and relationships with peers, superiors, organization policies and procedures, formal training, and outcomes. This last influence incorporates the image of the role of the leader, skills, norms and values, and communication networks (Normore, 2004c).

As a consequence, it influences the leadership styles predominant and accepted in a particular organization. Women continue "paving the way" through the different organizational cultures in search of leadership styles that are more authentic and less accommodative.

Feminine leadership styles: the trends that influence women in education
Earlier thinking emphasized that women who had achieved leadership positions were imitators of male characteristics, but contemporary theories recognize feminine leadership styles (Helgesen, 1990; Stanford *et al.*, 1995). Like any new trend in traditional settings, it takes years to develop styles until these styles are understood and accepted. Meanwhile, women face several barriers that prevent them from been considered leaders or leadership candidates (Still, 1994). Obstacles with this origin have been described as "the glass ceiling" as a metaphor of an invisible top that halts women in moving up the career ladder at a certain point (Oakley, 2000).

Nonetheless, the increasing participation of women in the labor market in the last half century, and their movement to managerial positions has changed the definition of leadership (Kark, 2004). Female leadership tends towards a style defined as "interactive leadership" (Rosener, 1990) that involves:

- encouraging participation;
- sharing power and information;
- enhancing self-worth;
- changing self interests for an overall good;
- relating power to interpersonal skills; and
- believing in better performance when feeling good.

Because women have benefited little from the typical behaviors of the Industrial Age organization, they have no affinity to them, and are ready to try new ways of leadership (Evans, 2001). More than ready, women are free from feminine parameters of leadership to compare to in their trial and error quest to develop their own styles.

Women leaders in education need to find the leadership styles that, without denying its feminine origins, result in effectiveness. The redefinition of skills and characteristics of an effective school leader, following the current trends of organizational leadership, will help erase gender stereotypes and focus on desirable characteristics that candidates (men or women) bring to the position (Logan, 1998).

Women in education: from teaching the class to leading the school
Educational leadership refers to "leadership influence through the generation and dissemination of educational knowledge and instructional information, development of teaching programs, and supervision of teaching performance" (Shum and Cheng, 1997, p. 166). Despite the predominance of female teachers across all panels (i.e. primary, elementary, middle, secondary), leadership positions are held predominantly by men. And even with increased numbers of female and minority group educators becoming prepared as administrators, school districts continue to hire white men (Glass *et al.*, 2000). Qualified women and minority educators provide an important resource for meeting current and impending school leadership shortages but are often ignored (Cooper *et al.*, 2000). Young and McLeod (2001) identified that women's entrance into

educational leadership depends on their career aspirations, their leadership orientations or styles, the particular exposure to transformational leadership, their experiences, and the support they gain when entering administration. Regardless of their motives, women have proved their capacity to be educational leaders (Shakeshaft, 1987).

Role of the school leader: changing demands and expectations

The role of the school leader in successful schools has transcended the traditional notion of functional management, power, behaviour style, and instructional leadership. Whereas, in the past, the job of school leader was considered as primarily managerial, the realities of our global society have shifted the focus from management (i.e. making decisions about how things should be done - the "nuts and bolts" of operations in order to sustain organizational efficiency) to leadership (i.e. making decisions about what should be done to improve an organization - visioning, planning, change and consensus building). According to Kowalski, (2003, p. 2) "an effective school administrator usually must be both a manager and a leader".

Today's school leaders face more complex expectations forged by a very different student population and a new generation dissatisfied with the educational status quo. At a time when many view the schools as one of the few intact social organizations, students arrive with very different attitudes, motivations, and needs than students of generations past (Young and Kochan, 2004). International research indicates that successful schools have leaders who establish a productive and professional school culture (Stoll, 1999), have a clear vision (Fullan, 2003), are knowledgeable about teaching and learning (Wesson and Grady, 1993) and protect schools from demands that make it difficult for schools to operate on a professional basis (Normore, 2004c). School leaders in less successful schools seem to perceive their role to be more that of a middle manager while leaders in highly successful schools view themselves as educational leaders (Normore, 2004c) who contribute heavily to school improvement and school effectiveness (Hopkins, 1994; Mortimore and MacBeath, 2001; Thomas, 1995). Effective school leaders are vital to successful restructuring (Peterson, 1999), to change and improvement (Fullan, 2003), and are clear on expectations for student learning (SCCC, 1997). Expectations of modern school leaders include new knowledge and skill for instructional leadership, discipline, supervision, fundraising, public relations expertise and fiscal management (Leithwood *et al.*, 1999; Shuttleworth, 2003). More accountability and responsibility have been added to the job over the years causing some of the best school leaders to be bogged down to the extent that they have lost much of their leadership, rather than management, quality (Normore, 2004c; Shuttleworth, 2003; Simkins, 2003).

The walls that divide the playground from the real world

Across nations, state legislators and administrator organizations have determined that a leadership crisis exists in educational administration (Schmidt, 1992; Skrla, 2000; Normore, 2004c). A report by the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (as cited in Logan, 1998) states that the demand for school administrators in the USA and Canada is becoming greater with a forecasted 10 percent to 20 percent increase through 2005 due to retirement, turnover, and lack of interested and qualified applicants. Little consideration has been given to the underutilization of women in

educational administration to solve the crisis. The problem of this under-representation is primarily due to stereotypes attached to women, more specifically, their lack of capacity to hold leadership positions (Young and Kochan, 2004). Teaching has traditionally been seen as a "suitable" job for women; unfortunately, it has not been easy to get rid of this role assigned on them and to enter into the perceived "masculine" world of leadership (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). The reason behind this fact is the social perception of women as teachers but not as leaders. Teaching and leading are often treated as separate worlds, characterized by different activities and senses, employing different languages, guided by different purposes, and carried out by distinct types of people (Lafleur, 1999).

The consequential explanation, though unrealistic and commonplace, of the scarcity of women leaders in education is their lack of aspiration to occupy leadership roles. Contrary to this belief, the number of women currently enrolled and already graduated from educational administration programs since 1980 is increasing, so lack of aspiration is clearly not a barrier (Logan, 1998). The good news though should not overlook the fact that some women do not enter the leadership field because they have decided not to do so. The path to leadership for women is steep and with obstacles enough to make it hard to see the "forest for the trees".

Well schooled in gender. The fact that most teachers are women and most administrators are men cannot be understood without a gender analysis (Shakeshaft, 1993). Slater and Mendez (1998) confirm that gender impacts the way women administrators speak of long-term goals, view their impact on the organization, and interact with others in the workplace. The repeated influence of gender in women's careers is evident even in professions that are considered, by definition more so than praxis, female-dominated. The theories and models of educational leadership are criticized as suffering from an androcentric bias-view of the world through a male lens-when applied to female subjects (Shakeshaft, 1987, 1993). Success for school administrators revolves around male models of discipline and power, business male models of administration, and models of training that focus on mentoring by traditional authorities (Grogan, 1994). Blackmore (1989) is even more radical arguing that educational leaders display masculine attributes and behaviors, making women invisible in the administrative field. Invisibility is the result of women leaders' stumped in the background culture as a survival strategy. Another contributing factor is the indifference towards the proclaimed value of women's experiences in the educational field. Regan and Brooks (1992, p. 16), state that: "Just as we believe that all people, women and men, can learn from the experience of men, so too we believe that all people, women and men, can learn from the experience of women."

The walls within. The problem that most aspiring women school leaders encounter is not the lack of rights to earn those positions but the access given to them (Cubillo and Brown, 2003; Schmidt, 1992). Women at the highest levels in education are running a solo act in leadership but with many spectators and critics. The greatest barrier for women to become school administrators is sex discrimination (Shakeshaft, 1993). Evidence of discrimination is apparent in external barriers like recruitment, selection, evaluation, and reward systems in schools and school districts (Schmidt, 1992). As an example, Powney and Weiner (1991) mention that senior administrative positions (i.e. central office) are frequently blocked for women because they lack the prior requirement of middle management status (i.e. site-based leadership), have insufficient

experience or are too young for a post like that. However, the situation is prone to change for the benefit of women and the curtain of the next act will open with opportunities they have been denied for so long. It is more common today that the selection of school-based personnel (teachers) happens at the local school level through school councils with increasing women participation and influence that might help promote other women to leading positions (Logan, 1998). However, decisions about promotion and hiring of school leaders continue to occur at the district office level through human resource management.

Mentoring for women leaders in education. Mentoring is key in promotion chances as teachers entering the field are helped to succeed and advance (Logan, 1998; Powney and Weiner, 1991; Schmidt, 1992). Particularly important for women educators, if they want to be successful, is the access to at least one of the three sources of mentorship identified by Ehrich (1994):

(1) the principal -provides opportunities and experience;

(2) executive staff like directors and inspectors – offers opportunities for networking; and

(3) participation in committees -serves to gain visibility and experience.

In general, opportunities for mentoring in education, whether cross-gender or same-gender, do not abound. The reasons for the lack of cross-gender mentoring opportunities are identified as: lack of access to informal networks, women stereotyped as not suited for leadership, and the sexual connotations involved. Regarding same-gender mentorship, Young and McLeod (2001) stressed the important effect of same-gender role models as they reinforce the idea that teaching and leading are not two different types of behavior in education. However, teachers aspiring to leading positions find it difficult to gain support from female mentors. It is commonly assumed that first females in high ranking offices in education are scarce, and second, issues and prejudices arise in same-gender mentoring when women at the top are not willing to help others advance (Kleine, 1994; Bascia and Young, 2001).

Leading and transforming education: general trends among women in education
The complex contemporary reality calls for female educational leaders to move away from the hierarchical, and control-and-command environment (Wesson and Grady, 1993). The key difference in female leadership styles in education lies in the development of a new leadership paradigm that considers educational leaders as change agents with a scope of influence larger than the school premises. According to Bascia and Young (2001, p. 275), "A popular rationale for appointing women as educational administrators is not based on social justice and equality but rather joins current assumptions about the sort of leadership style that is best for the school improvement".

Even when women are trained in similar ways as men for supervisory positions in education, they bring with them expectations and behaviors based on gender (Shakeshaft, 1993). A genderless approach to leadership recognizes neither the existence of different gender-role orientations nor the differences in the leadership functions (Shum and Chen, 1997). In the realm of education, women in leading positions are expected to behave with sufficient authority to gain respect and maintain discipline, and with a large dose of caring and nurturing attitudes to fulfill the

gender-role expectations. Segal (1991) found that women principals with masculine gender-role orientation may emphasize control and institutional power; whereas those with feminine gender-role orientation may emphasize collaboration and interpersonal skills.

As change agents, female educational leaders start with improving the current situation of the school towards the image of an ideal they have envisioned. Slater and Mendez (1998, p. 697), affirm that: "Imaging a future state that is desired requires a rehearsal, a run through of scenarios of alternatives; to not just listen to others, but be able to visualize oneself doing tasks, to say to oneself, I will become a ..., or I can do this or that." Women school leaders focus on a vision of what the school should be and where the school should head to (Fennell, 2002; Funk *et al.*, 2002; Gold, 1996; Grogan, 1994; Kleine, 1994; Regan and Brooks, 1992; Wesson and Grady, 1993).

Female educational leaders focus on their primary responsibility which is the care of children and their academic success. If women educational leaders are more involved with curriculum and instruction (Brunner, 1998; Grogan, 1994; Schmidt, 1992; Shakeshaft, 1993) and accountability for student achievement becomes local (Logan, 1998), women leaders can prove that their primary responsibility is being met. Building relationships with others to achieve common goals is a recurrent topic of women in leadership positions in education. Women value close relationships with students, staff, colleagues, parents, and community members as key in school leadership (Regan and Brooks, 1992; Wesson and Grady, 1993; Williamson and Hudson, 2001). In schools headed by women, relationships develop constantly through spending time with people, communicating, caring about individual differences, showing concern for teachers and marginal students, and dedicating more energy to motivate others (Grogan, 1994; Regan and Brooks, 1992; Schmidt, 1992; Williamson and Hudson, 2001). Important for school leaders is also communication to keep everybody informed and to reach others (Funk *et al.*, 2002; Gronn, 2003; Shuttleworth, 2003; Wesson and Grady, 1993).

The ways women approach the job of school leadership are related to the models of leadership they encounter in their careers, particularly transformational styles, and the goals they hope to achieve through their positions as school leaders (Young and McLeod, 2001). What influences women's leadership styles in education is the degree of identification with a leadership model, whether to be adopted or discarded. When women identify with their administrative role models, they tend towards a leadership orientation to be non-traditional, transformational or different (Young and McLeod, 2001). Inspiration and motivation in transformational leadership theory, is what drives these women to adopt this leadership style as their own. The female leadership styles in education are more democratic, participative, inclusive and collaborative (Bascia and Young, 2001; Eagly *et al.* (1992); Normore, 2004b; Powney and Weiner, 1991; Skrla, 2000). Consequently, women envision their leadership through shared problem solving, and decision-making (Fennell, 1999; Gold, 1996; Grogan, 1994; Kleine, 1994; Regan and Brooks, 1992). Shared decision-making and problem-solving with all involved leaves enough space to deviate from the hierarchical systems of approval and concentrate on the solution of the problem for the general good. As a result, school decisions are based on what is in the best interest of the students and what is right, not necessarily on policies (Williamson and Hudson, 2001) or power (Hall, 1994).

Women leaders value having influence more than having power (Hall, 1994). Generally speaking, women leaders in education have difficulty talking about power as authority or dominance. The non-traditional view of power meets the gender-role expectations that women are not dominant or in charge (Brunner, 1998; Fennell, 1999). When teaching in classrooms, women have learned to motivate students without the need to use domination (Fennell, 1999). Women leaders in education incorporate "power with" into the transformational leadership model through empowerment. Staff empowerment occurs by dispersing knowledge throughout the school (Bascia and Young, 2001; Blackmore, 1989; Brunner, 1998; Fennell, 1999, 2002). Knowledge is shared for the noble intention of extending participation in collaborative decision-making and problem-solving processes. Power also serves to build an environment of mutual trust and respect, and is linked to the principles of justice, fairness, and responsible behavior towards others (Hall, 1994; Fennell, 1999, 2002).

Conclusions and implications
Leadership has often been described as the most studied and least understood behavioral process. Whatever our idealized view of educational leaders and despite calls for leaders who shape the fundamental culture, structure, and goals of educational organizations, stereotypes about leadership need to be challenged and addressed before educational training programs designed to promote women to the top will be successful. The absence of women in the ranks of senior management is a telling sign that the whole process of selection, recruitment and promotion in educational organizations is in need of an overhaul. As Oakley (2000) asserts, even if these policies and practices are reformed the process of leadership/followership dynamics and acceptance of diversity in organizational cultures needs to be confronted and changed to destroy the roots of gender bias.

The literature on gender differences seems to be guided by a concern for organizational efficiency and oriented towards being applicable and relevant for practitioners. As referenced by Brandser (1996), this fact only adds to the strategically supple contributions in attempts to make organizations perceive it in their best interest to integrate an employment policy which favors women, and provide gender equality. The predominance of men in positions of power enshrines the masculine approach. Within this mindset, anyone with a more feminine approach would likely be disadvantaged whereby appraisals may be influenced by gender and not by facts.

Currently, educational leaders are very conscious of the changing social, political and professional expectations. The challenge for educational leaders is meeting the changing expectations for social and professional demands, without losing sight of the needs of those they serve and to protect their best interests. Changing expectations have profound implications for educational leadership practices and policies.

Implications
Educational institutions at all levels need to examine the kinds of professional development programs offered to aspiring leaders, faculty, and other staff. In order to help women become more successful in educational leadership roles activities should be developed and implemented that help employees examine how various policies, procedures, rules, and norms may limit the success of women. The first implication focuses on the fact that educational institutions should engage in critical reflection

about issues of inclusion and expand the opportunities for diverse leadership styles and for women at all levels. Coordinated efforts that target women in teacher preparation programs, public school teaching positions and educational administration programs are necessary and should involve not only members of female administrator organizations but also historically traditional and male-dominated groups. The particular kinds of programs, schools, and students to which women are disproportionately assigned and assign themselves can compel them to seek information, skills, and influence beyond what is readily available to either teachers or administrators (Young and McLeod, 2001). It seems appropriate that efforts to increase the capacity of schools by broadening educators' work beyond conventional notions of teaching and administration would be improved by paying attention to how gender shapes possibilities and desires for careers in education.

A second implication centers on a promising discussion of gender among board members regarding central office administrators (i.e. superintendent). This discussion could focus on multiple and intertwined ways in which the current gendered culture of the superintendency disadvantages women. Policy action targeted at school boards would seem essential since school boards, hire, fire, evaluate, and politically support superintendents. If the profession is ever to progress in addressing the gender stratification, it is important for those connected to educational administration at all levels to hear and understand women's stories. As the literature indicates (e.g. Skrla, 2000), school boards should continually send reminders of the need to recognize, challenge, and change the androcentric constructions and discriminatory policies in the education profession.

The third implication focuses on the importance of transcending the cultural norms. In order to fully capture the impact of gender and culture on leadership, research must involve a greater number of countries at extreme ends of the value dimensions for measuring leadership effectiveness. While it has been common practice for research to define the context in which leadership is studied, using simple classifications such as "masculine or feminine contexts", it seems appropriate to begin refining the particular management layer that is studied. As maintained by Van Engen *et al.* (2001), how leaders differ may depend on various elements including the organizational levels, influence of the immediate working context, or a particular arena (i.e. education, corporate). Only then can we compare results and find the conditions in which sex differences in leadership styles occur.

A fourth implication concerns leadership and mentoring programs. Mentoring is not readily understood in the organizational behavior paradigm. It seems appropriate for human resource professionals and organizations to consider increasing both the formal and informal socialization opportunities for women to meet potential mentors on an informal basis. This could be done through events where the number of female mentors is increased. Suggested research would entail a direct examination of the correlates of leadership and mentoring with respect to characteristics and attributes in the education arena.

Finally, there is an absence of essential practical information for administrators in the traditional literature. This literature gap not only leaves women without a clear conception of issues important to them, it also deprives men from understanding how their cultural identity as men interacts with women's cultural identity as females and the effects their interaction has on organizational dynamics. Perceptions of the world

as women experience it and trying to document their perspectives will likely expand the knowledge base of practice in educational administration. As Shakeshaft (1993) emphasized a decade ago, examining female learning styles, and the treatment of females in schools and the curriculum served up to them might help think of ways to improve schooling for females and provide windows of opportunities for leadership roles for women.

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